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Hydration for Youth Athletes

Why is proper hydration important?

Hydration and nutrition play a vital role in athletic competition at all levels and ages of athletic competition. Proper hydration has been shown to improve performance, decrease fatigue and cramping, and decrease the risk of injury.

General Hydration Information:

- Avoid carbonated and/or caffeinated beverages
- Beverages high in sugar (such as many juices) should be avoided the day of competition
- Electrolyte beverages (such as Gatorade or PowerAde) may be substituted for some of the water; however, the majority of fluid intake should be water
- If prone to muscle cramping an increased intake of an electrolyte beverage can help. Mustard, bananas and pickles/pickle juice can also be helpful.
- If the athlete's urine is dark in color, additional fluids should be consumed until urine is no longer dark.
- Increase fluid intake during warmer weather and in children who sweat more than normal
- Insure proper intake of fluids in colder weather as children tend to drink less
- By the time the athlete feels thirsty they are already considered dehydrated; therefore, it is important to teach young athletes about the proper intake of fluids before, during and after practice and competitions to decrease the associated risk of dehydration

Pre Practice/Competition	During Practice/Competition	Post-Practice/Competition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 8oz of water in the morning ➤ 1-2 hours prior to activity an additional 8-16oz of water ➤ 20-30 minutes prior drink 4-8oz 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Intake of fluids every 15-20 minutes of activity is preferred; however, is not always possible. Athlete should have fluids during each break. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A minimum of 16oz should be consumed within 2 hours after activity. ➤ Continue fluid intake until urine is light in color

If the athlete experiences abdominal cramping or discomfort during activity after following the above recommendations you may also increase the time prior to activity of fluid intake and slightly decrease the amount of fluid being consumed at one time until finding what works best for the child.

For further information on this topic or for general questions call the Sports Medicine Hotline Number